ABOUT GROWTH

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION ABOUT GROWTH MANAGEMENT SUMMER 2005

Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development

Contents

Integrating watershed and growth management planning

By Chuck Jones
Senior Planner, Natural Resources, Douglas County

The Douglas County Watershed Planning Unit approved their watershed plan, *Watershed Management Plan Moses Coulee and Foster Creek Watersheds WRIA 44 & 50,* in September 2004. The boards of county commissioners for Douglas and Grant counties later adopted it. The Foster Creek Conservation District led the development of the watershed plan.

Since we are such a dry county (10-12 inches annually), water is a concern from all viewpoints – but particularly as it relates to agriculture, domestic supplies, and the natural environment. During the watershed planning process, the group recognized that there are many possible conflicts in water use and rights, especially with growing levels of domestic well use in the rural/agricultural areas and potential changes to existing agricultural water rights.

Agricultural water need is one of the issues addressed in watershed planning for Moses Coulee and Foster Creek. PHOTO/CTED RITA R. ROBISON

Once implementation planning began, actions were grouped into four areas – water quality, water quantity, habitat, and instream flows. While the Columbia River was basically off limits to instream flow discussions, the group recognized that several activities, primarily agriculture and single-family development, may influence the other three actions along the river.

Since government agencies within the county have limited staff resources, many have staff working on multiple processes. This makes integration easier because communication is open and often. My role as a county employee has allowed me to work in local and regional salmon recovery efforts, watershed planning, growth management planning, and smaller local planning projects with the city governments within the county.

For watershed planning, I explained processes – such as Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) updates, the best available science (as it relates to CAOs), and shoreline management – that are already underway, and how they link to watershed planning goals, objectives, and actions. On water quality, the watershed Planning Unit was open to adding already existing, and required, processes and examining other areas – such as road maintenance, stormwater, and clearing and grading.

Also, the county has used information during watershed planning, either gathered from existing data or collected from new data, to document fish use, watershed conditions, and other localized environments that may change future patterns of development. Specific information on salmon and steelhead use was documented in several small streams. Water quality and quantity issues along the two largest lakes in the county will likely continue to affect the development pattern and current land uses on their shorelines.

The most important part of trying to integrate both ideas and actions from the two avenues of planning natural resources is making sure a continuing dialogue of the agencies and participants is created and continues throughout the processes.

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Published quarterly by the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, Growth Management Services, 906 Columbia St. SW, PO Box 42525, Olympia, WA 98504-2525.

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Watershed planning – How does it fit with comprehensive plans?

By Leonard Bauer, AICP
Managing Director, Growth Management Services

How watershed planning fits with comprehensive plans is one of the more frequently asked questions our office is receiving recently.

While the Watershed Planning Act of 1998 didn't specify how watershed management plans should be integrated with other planning efforts, there are many opportunities for the information and agreements resulting from watershed planning to help comprehensive planning efforts under the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The GMA provides a framework for local land use planning in Washington, while the Watershed Planning Act provides a framework for developing local solutions to water issues. Both frameworks emphasize collaborative work among adjacent jurisdictions, citizens, and interest groups. They also call for gathering information on which to base decisions that provide for a balance in the use of finite resources (land or water). This balance is sometimes difficult to achieve, as there are a variety of possible public uses to which these resources could be dedicated.

However, the GMA and watershed planning framework aren't set up to involve the same set of stakeholders, or to follow the same planning process. This can create difficulties and even some confusion regarding how they may be integrated. That is why, as the Douglas County article in this issue of *About Growth* points out, the most important part of trying to integrate the ideas and actions from the two frameworks is making sure a continuing dialogue of the participants is created and continues throughout the processes.

In this issue of About Growth, several watershed planning participants around the state share examples of how watershed and GMA planning can be integrated through continuing dialog among key planning groups. For example:

- Douglas County has used information gathered during watershed planning to document fish use, watershed conditions, and other localized environments that may better inform land use planning for future development near streams or lakes.
- The Nisqually watershed management plan recommends that comprehensive plans ensure that water rights are maintained on designated long-term agricultural areas.
- In Whatcom County, the results of watershed analyses will be incorporated into the Shoreline Master Program, the comprehensive plan, the Critical Areas Ordinance, salmon recovery efforts, stormwater master planning, shellfish recovery, and other county-wide planning efforts.
- In many watersheds, restoration projects have been identified that will achieve multiple benefits (e.g., actions that improve water quantity and/or water quality will also improve fish or wildlife habitat). These projects can be integrated into regulatory programs, such as critical areas protection programs, as reasons to adopt a risk-based approach to permit decision making, rather than a strictly prescriptive approach such as standardized buffers. The approach allows regulatory agencies to determine which mitigation opportunities provide the greatest certainty (least risk) for the resource being considered.

For further assistance on integrating watershed planning with GMA planning, contact Growth Management Services at (360) 725-3000, or the watershed planning program at the Washington State Department of Ecology at (360) 407-6548.

Share your success stories

What's your biggest or latest GMA success? Growth Management Services is beginning to provide "story leads" to reporters through the state.

Call or e-mail Rita R. Robison at (360) 725-3060 or *ritar@cted.wa.gov* with a description your community's success story.

Entiat watershed addresses water quality, habitat, instream flows, and water supply

By Sarah M. Walker
Entiat Watershed Coordinator, and Natural Resources Specialist, Chelan County Conservation District

Stakeholders in the Entiat River watershed have a vision of the future: a future that provides for the coexistence of people, fish, and wildlife.

The drive toward this vision began in 1991-1992 during a period of growing discontent, especially among area landowners, regarding water rights and fisheries enforcement actions. Forecasts of increased regulation and impending Endangered Species Act listings sent a clear message to the Entiat community that it could best prepare itself for the future by initiating its own planning effort rather than waiting for another entity to take the lead.

In December 1993 a small planning group of local landowners, representatives of the Chelan Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and Entiat Ranger District met to initiate the planning effort. The group organized using the NRCS Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) framework that included a Landowner Steering Committee and technical advisory committee(s), with overall coordination provided by the conservation district.

The 1998 Watershed Planning Act provided additional funding for the Entiat effort. The CRMP group reorganized to become the Entiat Watershed Planning Unit (EWPU), and broadened its stakeholder membership. The EWPU currently includes representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, NRCS, Bureau of Reclamation, Yakama Nation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), Chelan County, City of Entiat, Entiat Irrigation District, Knapp-Wham and Hanan Detwiler partnership ditches, North Central Washington Audubon Society, Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Longview Fibre Company, local landowners, and others.

The *Entiat Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 46 Management Plan* was unanimously approved by the Planning Unit in May 2004 and by the Chelan County Commissioners in September 2004. The plan addresses water quality, habitat, instream flows, and water supply, and contains numerous management recommendations. The EWPU has begun implementing projects and policies, including a water resources management program that will be codified later this year as Chapter 173-546 of the Washington Administrative Code.

True to its vision, the EWPU worked with Ecology and others to craft a rule that considers existing uses and balances anticipated future water uses with the needs of fish and wildlife. The rule sets instream flow levels for the Entiat and Mad rivers, designates a maximum future allocation (an amount of water that can be withdrawn for use/storage from specific streams at specific times above the instream flow levels), and includes a 5 cubic feet per second reservation of water for specific future uses.

Rule components were developed using a negotiated process that considered census data, growth rates, land use patterns, comprehensive plan elements, irrigation water use data, and hydrology and biologic information. The result is a rule designed to accommodate future domestic, commercial agricultural, and business/light industrial growth in the Entiat Valley, in balance with resource conservation. As part of rule implementation, Chelan County and the Chelan-Douglas Health District are working with the EWPU to identify the best method for tracking new domestic wells.

Other implementation actions underway include carrying out a reach habitat restoration project; exploring options to consolidate the Knapp-Wham and Hanan Detwiler irrigation ditches; and initiating a multipurpose water storage feasibility study.

Photo courtesy of Chelan County Conservation District

Chelan County Commissioners approve the Entiat watershed plan. Standing, L to R: Mike Kaputa, Chelan County; Jon Soest, NCW Audubon Society; Mary Jo Sanborn, Chelan County; Peggy Entzel, Chelan County Conservation District; Phil Jones, former Chelan County Conservation District; Ray Sandidge, landowner; Sarah Walker, Chelan County Conservation District; Phil Archibald, USFS; Jim Fisher, BLM; Karin Whitehall, USFS; Joni Vanderbilt, USFS. Seated, L to R: Commissioners Ron Walter, Keith Goehner, Buell Hawkins.

Watershed planning chronology

1998
- The Watershed Planning Act (RCW 90.82) provides a voluntary, comprehensive planning process for citizens, governments, and tribes to develop watershed management plans.

2001
- The Water Resources Management Act (ESHB 1832) brings significant changes, including funding for instream flows, water quality, and water storage assessments with priority given to instream flows.
- The Watershed Health Monitoring and Assessment Act (SSB 5637) committee explores comprehensive monitoring program focusing on salmon recovery, and recommends flow studies for all water critical watersheds and expansion of continuous flow monitoring.

2003
- The Legislature amends the Watershed Planning Act to add implementation as Phase 4 of watershed planning (2E2SHB 1336).

WATERSHED PLANNING PROCESS

Phase 1 – Organization
- Counties, the largest city, and the largest water utility (Initiating Governments) may gather and appoint a lead agency.
- The lead agency may apply for an organizing grant of up to $50,000 per WRIA or $75,000 for a multiple WRIA area.
- Initiating Governments identify and appoint Planning Unit members representing diverse water resource interests.
- The Planning Unit develops operating and decision-making structures and goals and scope of work for Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Technical assessment
- The lead agency may apply for up to $200,000 per WRIA to fund technical assessments of the collection, management, and distribution of data.
- Planning units may also develop strategies for improving water quality, protecting or enhancing fish habitat, and setting instream flow recommendations.
- The lead agency may apply for up to $100,000 per WRIA for each supplemental element: water quality, instream flow recommendations, and water storage assessments. Priority is given to instream flow work.

Phase 3 – Plan development and approval
- The lead agency may apply for up to $250,000 per WRIA to develop a watershed management plan, which must include water supply strategies to meet minimum flows for fish and provide for future out-of-stream uses.
- The Planning Unit approves its plan within four years of Phase 2 funding.
- The approved plan is submitted to counties for final approval and adoption.

Phase 4 – Watershed plan implementation
- A Planning Unit may apply for a matching grant of up to $100,000 per year ($125,000 for two WRIAs) for each of the first three years to develop and carry out a detailed implementation plan.
- The action items in watershed plans are carried out.

From: Ecology's "Status of Watershed Planning Efforts in Washington State," *2003.*

Progress being made in watershed planning

By Rita R. Robison, AICP
***About Growth* Editor**

The Watershed Planning Act, passed in 1998, provides a framework for developing local solutions to water issues. Framed around watersheds known as Water Resources Inventory Areas (WRIAs), this voluntary process allows citizens, governments, and tribes to form planning units to develop watershed management plans.

If a Planning Unit is established, it must address water quantity issues and has the option of addressing instream flows, water quality, and habitat. A total of 37 planning units representing 45 of the state's 62 watersheds have opted to participate in the planning process.

In 30 watersheds, planning units chose to examine instream flows and make recommendations to Ecology to set new or modify existing instream flows. Thirty-one chose to work on water quality, and 30 on habitat.

Watershed plans and instream flow recommendations are due four years after planning units receive the watershed assessment grant (Phase 2 funds).

Significant progress has been made in watershed planning since the act was passed, according to Ecology. In the last six years Washington has invested more than $30 million in grants to local governments to assist in the watershed planning process.

Seventeen watershed plans covering 23 WRIAs have been approved by planning units, with eight of those approved by their respective county governments. Four planning units are in Phase 4 Implementation. However, four plans covering four WRIAs were not approved or the planning units terminated the planning process.

Local citizens and elected officials have dedicated countless hours developing plans, strategies, and recommendations on how to meet existing and future water needs in their watersheds, Ecology states in its 2004 report to the Legislature. Strategies include more efficient use of existing supplies and reserving a limited amount of water for future households and minor small business purposes.

The benefits and success measures of watershed planning efforts, according to Gale Blomstrom, watershed coordinator for Ecology, are:

- Education, understanding, and appreciation of water resource issues.
- Collaboration between local, tribal, and state governments, citizens, and public/private water interests.
- Extensive data collection and documentation of existing conditions.
- Local involvement in solutions with participants helping to shape the future; leading to "ownership" in the outcome.
- Improved stewardship of water resources.
- Strategies being developed to manage water to meet needs of both people and fish.

In the coming two years, watershed planning units will be working on both plan development and implementation, which will require more work and resources. Ecology received $14 million in funding from the Legislature in 2005 to continue providing grant funding assistance to local government to carry out these efforts.

For more information on the state's watershed planning efforts, see *www.ecy.wa.gov/watershed.*

Excerpts from 2004 Report to the Legislature: Watershed Planning and Instream Flow Setting Progress, *Washington State Department of Ecology, December 2004 and updates from Ecology staff.*

The challenges of coordinating watershed and land use planning in Jefferson County

By Rita R. Robison, AICP
***About Growth* Editor**

Watershed planning is creating a tool for water resource management in Jefferson County.

Photo courtesy of Jefferson County

Water Resource Inventory Area 17 (WRIA 17), the Quilcene-Snow Creek watershed, is one of 62 watersheds in the state. WRIA 17 stretches from Sequim Bay in Clallam County east through the Quimper Peninsula of Jefferson County and south into the Hood Canal area just past Quilcene.

The goal of the WRIA 17 watershed planning process was to create a decision-making tool for water resource management, including future appropriation of water and land use and development decisions. The WRIA 17 Planning Unit completed and approved its Watershed Management Plan in October 2003 and forwarded the plan to the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners for final approval. In January 2005, the board approved it.

One of the recommendations of the plan was for the Planning Unit and Ecology to continue working collaboratively in an attempt to achieve consensus and approval of instream flow recommendations. (At the present time, no instream flows are set in rule in WRIA 17.) This has been an ongoing and challenging effort to set flows at a level that is both protective of fish and adequate to provide water for future growth. Once recommendations are finalized, Ecology will proceed with a public review process and adoption of the instream flow rule as part of the Washington Administrative Code.

Instream flows based on habitat studies are currently being discussed for seven of the subbasins within WRIA 17. One consideration in development of the proposed instream flow rule involves hydraulic continuity between groundwater and streams. It is assumed there is 100 percent continuity between surface and groundwater, and a 50 percent return to groundwater where domestic on-site septic systems recharge the aquifer. This is one of the concepts that sparks lively debate at watershed Planning Unit meetings, and, as the instream rule goes through the formal public process, may result in additional questions from members of the general public, who may be unfamiliar with the hydrology terms.

In addition to providing flows protective of fish, the proposed rule provides an allocation, or "reserve" of groundwater, to meet future growth demands. Reserves are being suggested for all seven subbasins. This reserve is formulated through accepting a 1 percent habitat loss (and the corresponding "reserve" amount) based on 1 percent of the low flow period. Groundwater withdrawn from the reserve will be "debited" against the account up to a maximum amount set aside.

Once adopted, the instream flow rule and associated reserve will have an effect on the county and future county residents. Any new water rights issued by Ecology will be subject to the instream flows. The county will only be able to issue a building permit under RCW 19.27.097 if: (1) a landowner can be served by a public water utility with capacity to serve (both legal and physical); or (2) in the case of a landowner who proposes use of an individual well, up to the maximum amount set aside in the reserve. This will necessitate keeping an account of the reserve, and the county and Ecology have agreed to work together cooperatively to manage this "reserve account" over time. This includes reviewing the reserve on a five-year basis. It also provides the possibility that the reserves could be adjusted over time through such actions as water rights purchasing.

For more information on WRIA 17, see http://wria17.co.jefferson.wa.us/oview.htm.

Jefferson County and Ecology staff contributed to this article.

Integrating watershed and growth management planning

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Within Douglas County, levels of knowledge and trust have improved over the period of time that watershed planning has occurred. While implementation of watershed planning isn't complete for all of the objectives the Planning Unit has identified, the group will continue meeting to work through difficult issues and make decisions affecting the organizations they represent and their community. Integrating these ideas into the local comprehensive plans will be just one of the results of their effort.

Watershed planning in the Nisqually River watershed

By Virgil Clarkson
Mayor, City of Lacey

In April 2004 the *Nisqually River Watershed Management Plan* was adopted by Pierce, Lewis, and Thurston counties – and became the first watershed plan in the state to be approved by the counties within a watershed.

The plan was developed under the Watershed Management Act (RCW 90.82), passed in 1998 to involve local interests in planning for water resource management in the state. The Nisqually watershed plan is a comprehensive strategy for balancing competing demands for water while at the same time preserving and enhancing the future integrity of the Nisqually watershed.

The intent of the watershed act is to develop watershed plans with local input from stakeholders who have the greatest knowledge of the watershed resources and a vision for the future of the watershed. In the Nisqually basin, the stakeholder group includes representatives from the Nisqually Indian Tribe; Fort Lewis; Thurston, Pierce, and Lewis counties; the Town of Eatonville; the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Yelm, and Roy; water districts, agriculture interests, citizens, and others. The chair of the Nisqually watershed Planning Unit represents the Nisqually Tribe, unique among watershed planning groups.

The Nisqually watershed is also unique because the basin is in good shape from a natural resource perspective in that prior efforts in the watershed have helped to maintain water and habitat quality.

The stakeholder group is now preparing to apply for implementation funds from Ecology. These funds will be used to develop an implementation plan that will prioritize recommended actions in the Watershed Management Plan and identify potential sources of funding for the actions.

However, some of the stakeholders have taken advantage of recent opportunities for implementing some of the recommendations in the plan. For example, an instream flow study initiated by the Nisqually Tribe on the Mashel River is nearing completion. Last fall, plan recommendations for protection of existing and potential water supplies were considered when Thurston County drafted changes to its Critical Areas Ordinance. Next year, Ecology is scheduled to process water rights applications within the McAllister Creek subbasin. And finally, the City of Yelm was recently awarded a grant to conduct a groundwater investigation on an aquifer located southwest of the city.

Many recommendations from the plan, particularly those related to growth and land use, will be implemented as other planning efforts are updated. For example, the plan includes several recommendations for how coordinated water system plans should address water supply and availability, both on a regional basis and from individual purveyors. Also, the plan recommends that comprehensive plans ensure that water rights are maintained on designated long-term agricultural areas.

The *Nisqually River Watershed Management Plan,* and additional information about watershed planning in Washington, is available on Ecology's Web site at *www.ecy.wa.gov/watershed.*

Land use recommendations from the Nisqually watershed plan will be carried out as other planning efforts are updated.

Photo courtesy of the City of Lacey

New growth management laws

During the 2005 legislative session, the following growth management-related laws were enacted.

Multimodal concurrency – 2SHB 1565

- Specifies that concurrency compliance improvements or strategies may include multimodal transportation.
- Requires regional transportation plans that include regional growth centers to address concurrency strategies, measurements for vehicle level of service, and total multimodal capacity.
- Requires a study to examine multimodal transportation improvements or strategies to comply with GMA concurrency requirements.

Comprehensive plans – ESHB 2171

- Adjusts the deadlines one year forward for required updates to critical areas ordinances for local governments with updates due in 2005, 2006, and 2007.
- Counties and cities in compliance with the GMA statutory review and revision schedule, and counties and cities demonstrating substantial progress towards compliance with the schedule for critical areas regulations, may receive financial assistance from the Public Works Assistance and Water Quality accounts.
- Until December 1, 2005, a county or city required to satisfy the 2004 GMA review and revision requirements, that is demonstrating substantial progress towards compliance with requirements for its comprehensive plan and development regulations, may receive financial assistance from the accounts.

Long-term air transportation – ESSB 5121

- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment and report results in 2006.
- Requires WSDOT to conduct a 25-year capacity and facilities market analysis, forecasting demands for passengers and air cargo, and report results in 2007.
- Governor to appoint a ten-member Aviation Planning Council to make recommendations on future aviation and capacity needs.

Physical activity – ESSB 5186

- Land use elements of comprehensive plans encouraged to consider using approaches to urban planning that promote physical activity.
- The Transportation Element must contain a pedestrian and bicycle component that includes identified planned improvements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and corridors to enhance community access and promote healthy lifestyles. Comprehensive transportation programs must include any new or enhanced bicycle or pedestrian facilities identified in the Transportation Element.

Restructuring WSDOT – ESB 5513

- The Governor appoints Secretary of Transportation, with Senate consent.
- Secretary proposes the agency budget and authorizes departmental request legislation.

Transit service and planning – SHB 2124

Creates the Office of Transit Mobility in WSDOT to coordinate transit service and planning.

Habitat Conservation – ESSB 5396

Adds two new categories to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program for farmlands preservation and riparian protection.

Small City or Town Street and Sidewalk Improvement Program – SSB 5775

To be administered by the Transportation Improvement Board and funded through a special account, subject to legislative appropriations.

Agricultural land – SB 5589

Creates a method, which doesn't require voter approval, for property owners of agricultural land located within a code city to petition for exclusion from the incorporated area of that city.

Development of rural areas – SSB 6037

- Modifies GMA provisions for permitted public services and facilities in qualifying limited areas of more intensive rural development.
- Expires on August 31, 2005.

County conservation futures levy – ESHB 1631

- Allows a county to spend a maximum of 15 percent of a conservation futures levy fund for maintaining and operating property acquired with the fund.
- Requires a county to adopt measures to increase the capacity of land to enable housing and employment growth when conservation futures land acquisitions cause a reduction in a county's capacity to accommodate planned growth.

Recreational facilities – EHB 2241

- Authorizes Snohomish County, until June 30, 2006, to designate qualifying agricultural lands as recreational lands.
- Establishes designation criteria.

A watershed-based approach to natural resource management

By Jeff Chalfant, AICP
Senior Natural Resources Planner, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services, and

Margaret Clancy
Senior Wetland Scientist, Parametrix

Whatcom County's efforts to protect and mange the environment are focusing on watershed-based strategies. A growing number of scientific studies emphasize the need to consider watershed-scale environmental processes as central to natural resources management and sustainability.

The passage of the GMA in 1990 was an initial step toward a holistic approach to environmental protection that incorporated comprehensive land use planning with management of critical areas, resource lands, and open space. The movement toward a watershed-based approach to natural resource management was embraced by the passage of the Watershed Planning Act. Whatcom County is one of several local jurisdictions engaged in watershed planning (the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan) and the county is actively integrating watershed-based management approaches into its land use and natural resource plans, policies, and regulations.

Whatcom County understands that watershed-scale processes are critical to supporting natural resources and that planning at the watershed scale can streamline protection efforts, and ultimately relieve some of the regulatory burdens facing regulators and permit applicants alike. Whatcom County's draft 2005 Critical Area Ordinance includes provisions for watershed plans to "substitute" for critical area regulations and some land use restrictions.

Whatcom County is conducting a landscape-scale assessment of ecosystem processes to support development of the county's updated Shoreline Master Program. This landscape analysis examines key watershed processes – such as the movement of water, sediment, heat/light, and nutrients across the landscape – that shape and influence the health of aquatic systems including wetlands, streams, estuaries, and marine waters. Using an approach developed by Ecology, Whatcom County is:

- Identifying key processes within the landscape that are critical to aquatic resources.
- Mapping areas on the landscape that are important to the operation and maintenance of these processes.
- Assessing how these processes have been altered by human activity.
- Determining restoration and management needs for each watershed.

The results of this analysis will be incorporated into the Shoreline Master Program, the comprehensive plan, the Critical Areas Ordinance, salmon recovery efforts, stormwater master planning, shellfish recovery, and other county-wide planning efforts.

Additionally, Whatcom County is actively linking its Transfer of Development Rights program to watershed protection, evaluating ways to link open space purchase programs to sustainability, and connecting watershed objectives to shoreline and critical areas management efforts. Whatcom County is also a beneficiary of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program funds and is currently developing stronger linkages through on-going county-wide parks, recreation, and open space planning efforts which will be integrated with land use and natural resource management efforts.

The natural resources planning efforts underway in Whatcom County are examples of comprehensive, science-based approaches for determining resource management needs and restoration opportunities at the watershed scale. Restoration measures identified through these efforts have potential to achieve multiple benefits (e.g., actions that improve water quantity and/or water quality will also improve habitat for fish, shellfish, and other organisms) and be more sustainable than those that are identified through traditional, site-specific, or permit driven approaches.

Regulatory agencies can look to these watershed-based natural resource planning efforts as reasons to adopt a risk-based approach to permit decision-making. The approach allows regulatory agencies to determine which mitigation opportunities provide the greatest certainty (least risk) for the resource being regulated.

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